WITH COSSACK AND CONVICT

A SERIAL STORY OF STRANGE ADVENTURE

By WILLIAM MURRAY GRAYDON

A Tale of Far Siberia—Thrilling Experiences in the Penal Settlements of Russia. The Strange Tangling of the Web of Fate That Confused the Identity of an American Traveler With a Fleeing Nihilist.

CHAPTER I.

A SACRIFICE OF HONOR.

ON the morning of the 10th of April, 1890, Captain Andre Dagmar was breakfasting in the apartments on the second floor of 7517 Nevskoi Prospekt. He was seated at a small table which held a steaming samovar, a slice of broiled fish, caught that very morning in the Gulf of Finland, a plate of hot rolls, and a silver cigarette case blazoned with monograms and coronets. From the window at his side he could look down into the main thoroughfare of the Imperial city of St. Petersburg, that splendid boulevard which extends for two miles from the Moscow railway terminus to the banks of the Neva.

Captain Dagmar was a sturdy, well built young man, twenty-four years of age, with handsome patrician features, light blue eyes, light hair, and a soft mustache and beard of the same color. He was the eldest son of Count Vasily Dagmar, a captain of the imperial guard of cossacks, and (this in confidence) an under secretary to Colonel Jaroslav, the chief of the dreaded third section of police—three attributes which accorded to Captain Dagmar a high place in the social circles of St. Petersburg.

Suddenly a servant entered from an inner apartment and handed his master a paper which still bore the fresh odor of the presses.

"Ah, the Chronicle!" exclaimed Captain Andre. "It is late this morning, Sasha. No, thank you, I want nothing now;" and as the servant retired the captain tipped back his chair and spread out the paper upon his knees.

"Has anything happened, I wonder, during my brief absence?" he muttered. "Hardly, though, for the colonel would have notified me. Hullo! What does this mean?"

The front legs of the chair slipped heavily to the floor, and the ruddy flush on Captain Dagmar's cheeks faded swiftly away, leaving in its stead an ashen pallor. For an instant he gazed fixedly at the printed columns, which had suddenly become blurred by the trembling of his hands, and then in a low, surprised voice, he read aloud:

"The famous Nihilist, Serge Masloff, who was concerned in the recent dynamite plot and in the publication of the revolutionary journal, the Free Press, has at last been located in the city, and the police are confident of arresting him before evening."

Captain Dagmar tossed the paper on the table.

"The time has come," he muttered. "It has come at last—and yet I knew that this end was inevitable. Unhappy man! He has brought this all on himself. He refused all advice, all warning."

The captain placed a cigarette between his teeth, and without lighting it rose to his feet and began to pace the room nervously. No alarm was visible on his face, but rather an expression of keen sorrow—a touch of sympathy for this misguided Nihilist, Serge Masloff, who was to be arrested that very day.

"A person is waiting without to see you. I told him you were at breakfast, but he will take no denial."

The door opened noiselessly and Sasha was standing on the threshold in a deprecating attitude.

"Who is it?" demanded Captain Dagmar half angrily. "Did he give you his name or card?"

"No, sir. I requested him to do so, but he refused."

"Well, send him away," said the captain. "No, stop! Send him up, Sasha, at once. I can spare him a moment."

As Sasha hurried off Captain Dagmar hastily composed his features, and drew his dressing gown closer about him, for he had not yet made his toilet.

A moment later the caller who would not be denied entered the room. He was a man of about the captain's own build, genteelly dressed in a dark suit. A heavy mustache shaded his mouth, and his eyes were hidden by a pair of blue goggles.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Captain Dagmar sternly. His manner was now composed and without a trace of agitation.

Without replying the stranger turned and slipped the bolt of the door into the socket. Then facing Captain Dagmar again, he deftly removed his heavy mustache and blue goggles, revealing a smooth shaven face and a pair of light blue eyes.

"Paul—my brother!" gasped the captain, staggering backward and leaning on the table for support.

"Yes, it is I, Andre," replied the man, with a grim smile. "Paul Dagmar, your brother—but better known as Serge Masloff, the Nihilist."

A brief pause ensued, and then Captain Dagmar pointed to the paper lying on the table.

"Have you seen that?" he demanded hoarsely. "You must know that the police are on your track—that you will be arrested before the close of the day. Are you mad, that you come here at this hour of the morning?"

"I came for help," replied Paul bitterly. "You alone can save me. I knew that you were expected home last night, and I should have been here sooner, but circumstances prevented."

"I can do nothing," protested Andre. "I warned you in time, but you gave my words no heed. Now it is too late. You must abide by the consequences of your folly."

"But supposing that the power to aid me was in your hands, would you not use it, provided that no harm could come to you?"

"That is a futile question," replied Andre. "I refuse to discuss it."

"It is not a futile question," said Paul. "You can save me if you will. Listen, and I will tell you all, but don't interrupt me, for the time is very short. That paragraph in the morning paper is true. Some one has played traitor, and the police not only have proofs of everything that I have done, but they have discovered where I am, and the city will be ransacked from end to end before nightfall. Russia is too hot to hold me, and I want to get away to England or America. If you will aid me to do this I swear that I will have nothing more to do with the revolutionary party—that in future I will lead a blameless life. No—don't interrupt me. You can help me, and you must. Write a note to Colonel Jaroslav informing him that the bearer is going to Berlin for you on secret business, and instructing him to issue a clean passport in the name of Nicholas Pashua. It is now 10 o'clock, and in two hours I will be on the way to the frontier. The plan is absolutely void of danger, either to you or to me. The railway stations are all closely watched, it is true, but my disguise is perfect; and, besides, who would dare question the signature of Colonel Jaroslav? None would ever know that Nicholas Pashua was Serge Masloff, nor will my escape ever be brought home to you. In a free country I will lead a different life, and the world will never hear of me again."

With various emotions depicted in his face, Andre Dagmar had listened to this passionate speech, and now, with an expression full of horror and despair, he paced to and fro across the room, thinking how he could best make answer. Suddenly he turned on his brother so fiercely that the latter cowered and shrank back, as though fearing a blow.

"Are you not satisfied," he cried, "to have driven our mother into the grave with a broken heart and bowed down our father with sorrow? And now you demand a last sacrifice—my honor. How can I ever hold up my head and fulfill the obligations of my high office, if I do this thing? I will not speak of the risk, which I assure you is not inconsiderable. You ask me to be a traitor to the Czar, who has ever honored our family. Do you wonder that I hesitate to do a favor to his greatest enemy?"

"But think of the consequences if you refuse," cried Paul. "I shall be arrested and hanged in the public square—without even the formality of a trial—or at the best sent to Siberia for life. And think, too, of the publicity. Many will surely discover that Serge Masloff is in reality Paul Dagmar, the son of the illustrious Count Vasily, and brother to Captain Andre Dagmar of the imperial guard. Where will be the boasted honors of our family then? Those who know the truth now are few."

"Enough!" said Andre, in a hoarse, changed voice. "Heartless wretch that you are, I must still remember that you are of my blood—that you are my brother. I will do what you ask, and may God forgive me and you! In return for this sacrifice I ask you to keep your promise—to lead a better life in that far country which will become your home."

Andre's voice failed him. He sat down at a smal desk and began to write hastily, while Paul stood silently by the window, having by this time donned his false mustache and goggles.

At last Andre rose with a sealed and folded paper in his hand.

"Here is the order for the passport," he said, in a low voice. "That stamp on the outside will take you past the guards and give you an audience with the inspector. I need not caution you to be discreet."

Paul took the paper and put it safely away.

"I can't thank you as you deserve," he said, with much emotion, "but I appreciate this all the same. I will keep my promise, be assured of that. And now I must go. Farewell, Andre, and God be with you!"

With a quick motion Andre threw his arms about his brother and kissed him on the lips.

"Farewell, Paul," he murmured, and then tearing loose he threw himself into a chair by the table and buried his face in his arms, not hearing the opening and closing of the door, nor the footsteps that grew fainter and fainter as they passed down the stairway.

Andre is thinking of those long ago days when Paul was young and innocent, and the sharer of his boyish sports. We will leave him there alone with his sorrow while we relate as briefly as possible, to the better understanding of this tale, the sad misfortune of the Dagmar family.

None in all the vast Russian empire was held in greater esteem by the Czar than Count Vasily Dagmar, and his forefathers before him. The family was an old and illutrious one, rich in traditions, titles and estates.

But Count Vasily was the last surviving scion of this noble family—the other branches having all become extinct—and in the year 1865 he married Miss Maud Templeton, the daughter of an attache of the United States legation at St. Petersburg. Such marriages were at that time much rarer than they are now, but the couple were devotedly attached to each other, and all went well.

Andre Dagmar was born in the Spring of 1866, and Paul just two years later.

Of Andre we need not here speak. It has been shown to what social and military prominence he attained. His character was estimable and above reproach.

But Paul, even at an early age, was wild and wayward.

Possibly he inherited some vicious trait from far remote ancestors—a case of heredity that is said to be not uncommon. At all events(this was the only conclusion possible at the time.

The lad showed a decided passion for low company, and ran away from home and from school on numerous occasions.

At the age of seventeen he suddenly became a convert to Socialistic principles, and talked in a manner which horrified the count. In spite of every effort to save him, the lad now went from bad to worse, and finally it became known that he had actually joined the revolutionary party. Count Vasily now disowned his younger son, forbidding the family to hold any communication with him, or ever to mention his name. A year later the countess died of a broken heart, and from that time the count was a changed man, though he still kept up his social relations, and hid as far as possible the grief that was gnawing at his heart.

Paul Dagmar meantime sank deeper in his chosen career of crime, and at last, young as he was, became a recognized leader of the Nihilistic party under the name of Serge Masloff. His identity was known to not more than one or two persons outside of his brother Andre, and for several years previous to the opening of this story Count Vasily had known nothing whatever of the son he had disowned.

But Andre knew, and in spite of all he still cherished in secret an affection for Paul—an affection that he had known first in early childhood, when the brothers shared their sports. Andre took advantage of his connection with the bureau of police to keep informed of all Paul's movements, and the two had many secret interviews.

But all advice and entreaty were wasted on Paul. He sullenly persisted in his evil ways—though he imagined himself working for his country's good—and even extorted from Andre, quite unknown to the latter, various pieces of information which he used to the disadvantage of the police.

It is certain that Paul did not return his brother's affection, though he made a pretense of doing so. It was from selfish motives alone that he kept up communication with him. It is surprising, but nevertheless true, that one so young should have reached such a foremost place in the ranks of the Nihilists. At the age of twenty-two Serge Masloff had been editor of the revolutionary organ, the Free Press, and had been concerned in more than one dynamite outrage and attempted assassination. Now, as has been shown his career had been cut short, and the imminent danger of arrest had prompted him once more to seek his brother.

Let us see what strange and almost incredible things resulted from that interview in Captain Dagmar's apartments.

CHAPTER II.

CRIME AND ESCAPE.

The Nevskoi Prospekt was astir with busy life when Serge Masloff turned into it from the apartments of Andre Dagmar.

With the utmost fearlessness the Nihilist strode along through the crowd, keeping one hand pressed against his breast, where the precious document safely reposed, and occasionally letting his other hand stray to his hip pocket as though something of value was concealed there as well. Finally he turned into a quieter street, and at once quickened his pace. Under the ugly blue goggles his eyes were gleaming with satisfaction, and he gave expression to his thoughts in low mutterings that were barely audible to his own ears.

"I have succeeded far better than I dared to hope," he said. "Nothing can thwart my purpose now. Before evening all Russia will ring with my name, and I shall be far away—far beyond the reach of the police. As for Andre—sooner or later his part in the affair will be discovered. Poor fool! It is hard that he should suffer. And yet I hate him, the accursed aristocrat! I have always hated him, I think. How difficult it was at times to mask my feelings, and yet it was necessary to retain his favor and good will. But this ends it now. We shall probably never meet again, and yet I am resolved that this exile shall be only temporary. Some day, when the storm blows over, I will return and complete the work that is unfinished."

The approach of several gendarmes caused Serge Masloff to cut short his self-communing, and when those dreaded individuals had gone by he turned into another street, and after traversing half a block, halted before a three-story building with a stuccoed front. On the first floor was a baker's shop, and adjoining the entrance to this was a doorway through which a dark staircase was visible. On the upper floor of this dwelling were the private offices of Colonel Jaroslav, the dreaded inspector of the third section of police.

A man in civilian dress, who was lounging carelessly outside, stopped Serge Masloff at the entrance, but at the sight of the stamped document, which the latter promptly produced, he quietly motioned him to enter.

Masloff briskly ascended the staircase, and on reaching the narrow hall above he was confronted by a second guard, upon whom the document had the same effect.

"Is not your name Feodor?" asked Serge.

"No," replied the man. "It is Ivan."

"Ah, I was mistaken, then. You resemble a friend of mine. And how soon can I see the inspector?"

"In a short time, I think. Wait here. I will return at once."

Ivan was as good as his word. He disappeared through a door at the end of the hall, and came back in less than two minutes.

"The Inspector will see you now," he said. "Go right in." Serge Masloff calmly entered the room and closed the door behind him. The apartment was in the rear of the building, and was so dimly lighted by one side window that a lamp was burning on a large desk covered with papers and writing material. Behind the desk, facing those who entered, was Colonel Jaroslav, the man who was feared and hated by all the Nihilists in Russia. He was fifty years of age, with stern, hard face, steel gray eyes, and a closely cropped beard. He wore a full uniform, and a single diamond glittered on a finger of his right hand.

The room was in keeping with the inmate, void of furniture save a few chairs and a couch. It was dark and cheerless, with bare, grimy walls, and through the gloom a small door was visible against the rear wall.

When Serge Masloff entered the inspector looked sharply up from his writing.

"Well, what is it?" he demanded, coldly. "Be quick, for I am busy this morning. You come from Captain Dagmar, I believe?"

"Yes," replied Serge, "I have the honor to bring you this;" and stepping up to the desk in the full glow of the lamp he laid down the document.

He stood there motionless while the inspector opened the paper and glanced over the contents, nor did his calm bearing afford any indication of the terrible thoughts that were surging through his mind.

Colonel Jaroslav read Andre Dagmar's letter to the end, and then, with a brief glance at Serge, but no word of dreaded questioning, he quietly reached for a stamped sheet of paper and began to write, bending low over the desk.

Serge felt greatly relieved, though he had confidently expected nothing else. Captain Dagmar's place in the bureau of police was no insignificant one, and a request for a passport over his signature could arouse no suspicion in the mind of Colonel Jaroslav.

So evidently thought the inspector. It was quite a natural thing for Captain Dagmar to be sending police spies on secret missions, and, as it so happened, the bureau of police was even then trying to effect negotiations with its confreres in Berlin.

Colonel Jaroslav must have supposed that this affair was connected with that very matter, for without the least hesitation he covered the paper before him with writing, and placed it, carefully folded, in an envelope.

"Here is what you want," he said, with a careless glance at Serge. "A passport to Berlin in the name of Nicholas Pashua. It will take you through without questioning. You must make haste if you wish to take the noon train. By the way, is your errand connected with that Romanoff affair?"

As this last question left the inspector's lips Serge Masloff had stepped forward and taken the passport in his left hand.

"Yes," he replied, leaning over the desk. "It is the Romanoff affair;" and as he spoke his right hand shot swiftly from behind his back, firmly clasping a short, black object with a round top, and a second later it fell with crushing force on Colonel Jaroslav's forehead.

The stricken man threw up his arms with a low moan and sank forward until his feet protruded from under the desk, and his head rested on the back of the chair. A shudder passed through the muscular frame and then all was still. The eyelids dropped and a tiny stream of blood trickled down over them and lost itself in the iron gray beard.

Without a trace of remorse Serge Masloff looked on his murderous work. So confident was he that his victim was dead that he made no further examination.

"It is well," he muttered, as he put the precious passport in his pocket. "The poor wretches in Siberian mines are avenged. And now for escape—that is the most important thing. I shall not breathe easy until the train is whirling me toward the frontier."

Serge Masloff's first move in this direction was a daring one. He walked to the hall door and, pulling it open about an inch, called distinctly, "Ivan!"

"Yes, your honor," came the reply from the head of the staircase.

"Allow no one admittance this morning, Ivan," continued Serge, in a harsh, stern tone that was an admirable counterfeit of Colonel Jaroslav's voice. "I shall be occupied with this visitor until past noon—possibly later. See that my orders are carried out."

"Yes, your honor," said the unsuspecting Ivan, "your command shall be obeyed."

Serge quietly closed the door again not taking the precaution to lock it—and walked over to the desk. Without even glancing at the body of the inspector, which remained in the same attitude, he hastily opened the drawers and picked out a few documents which he stowed away in his pocket. A photograph, turned face upward, met his eye, and with a half start and a low exclamation of surprise he took possession of this also. Then he stepped to the side of the chair and coolly thrust his hand into the pocket of the inspector's trousers. A smile broke on his face as he drew out a short brass key, and he glanced significantly toward the narrow door in the rear wall. The meaning of that door he knew well, and through it lay his only hope of escape. It was a private exit from the building intended only for the inspector's use, and none but he carried a key to it.

"One thing more," muttered Serge, "and I am ready." He paused and listened for a moment to the sounds of traffic that penetrated the dingy room from the street. Then he took from the desk the letter that Captain Dagmar had given him, and the iron bar with the knotted end that lay beside it—the weapon that had struck the murderous blow. This latter he put back in his pocket, all bloody as it was—for he knew well that the passport he bore would call for no search of his person—and then, with the letter in his hand, he stepped to the side of the room where a fire of coals was smouldering in an open grate.

He tossed the paper down on this, watched it slowly blacken with the heat, and then, fearing to delay longer lest he should miss his train, he strode to the narrow door, and with a turn of the key flung it open.

A slight draft of cold air entered the room, and catching the half consumed letter, whirled it off the fire and dropped it gently at the feet of the inspector.

But Serge Masloff did not see this. A sudden panic seemed to have taken hold of him, a horror of the room and its ghastly contents. He stepped through the door, closed and locked it, putting the key in his pocket, and then made his way down the dark, steep staircase, thrusting out his hands nervously to prevent a fall.

He reached the bottom and traversed a long, narrow hall. A door, bolted from within, gave access to a private alley, hedged in by massive brick walls, between which, overhead, a strip of blue sky was visible. The alley terminated in a great iron gate. Here the key was called into need again, but before using it Serge Masloff put his blue goggles in his pocket and added to his black mustache a false beard of the same color.

Carefully locking the iron gate behind him he pushed on through a dirty, squalid street, encountering none but a few beggars, and a moment or two later he gained a more important thoroughfare, which led him in a short time to the Nevskoi Prospekt. Here he sought a clothing bazar, and purchased a long cloak of light material—for the weather was unusually cool even for April—which he paid for from a purse that seemed to be well stocked with rubles and bank notes. Then he hailed a drosky that happened by, and was driven rapidly away.

At 11:55 o'clock Serge Masloff—now Nicholas Pashua—was deposited at the Warsaw terminus, and promptly on the stroke of noon the Berlin express whirled out of the station on its long journey to the Russian frontier.

CHAPTER III.

LEFT BEHIND.

At 2 o'clock in the afternoon of the same day on which occurred the events related in the foregoing chapter, Donald Chumleigh purchased a through ticket to St. Petersburg at the Berlin railway station, and was shortly shown to a sleeping berth in the Warsaw express by an obsequious porter, who walked ahead of him, carrying his valise and bundle of wraps.

As Mr. Chumleigh is destined to be deeply involved in the further narration of this story, but brief space need be given him at the present time. He was an American—a resident of Philadelphia—and was about to visit Russia after an absence of twelve years. Mr. Chumleigh's parents were both dead, his mother having died five years before and his father two years later. In his early life Mr. Chumleigh, Sr., had resided in St. Petersburg, where he conducted a large and profitable mercantile business. There Donald was born, and there he lived until he was ten years old, when his parents, who were even then elderly people, returned to America and settled quietly down in the city of Philadelphia.

Donald's education had been begun in the Russian capital—where, by the way, he learned to speak the language fluently—and on his return to the United States he was first put in care of a tutor, then sent to a preparatory school, and finally to one of the leading American colleges, from which he graduated with high honors at the age of twenty-one.

During these years he kept up his knowledge of the Russian language by constant study, and, whenever, possible, by conversing with those who spoke it. Little did he dream of the disastrous, and yet fortunate, part it was destined to play in his after life.

He was now twenty-two years of age, tall, well built, with light hair and mustache, ruddy cheeks and a pleasing, attractive face. He was a fitting type of the better class of young Americans, generous, open-hearted and possessing a broad knowledge of the world, acquired partly from his reading and partly from his travels during the past year in his own country.

His father's death and his subsequent coming of age had placed him in possession of a fairly comfortable income, and now, after a few weeks spent in London and Paris, he was going to St. Petersburg to see the home of his childhood, which he still remembered clearly, and to visit several old friends of his father.

It was his intention to return to America in the Fall and devote himself to the study of law, for which he had a decided taste. His income was sufficient to make him independent, but he felt that a life of idleness would be uncongenial to him.

One little incident in his past life must not be omitted here, though Donald himself has long since forgotten it, and, indeed, never did regard it of much importance, even at the time of its occurrence. It was in the Summer of 1887, when Donald was just about completing his sophomore year at college, that he was summoned home by what proved to be the mortal illness of his father, who was then seventy-five years of age. He had been stricken by paralysis, and when Donald arrived late in the evening his power of speech was almost gone.

But he recognized his son instantly, and beckoned him to his side.

"The package!" he muttered, brokenly. "Take care—of it. Look in the secretary—the top drawer. Your name is—on it."

Those were the last intelligible words that Mr. Chumleigh spoke. He died twenty-four hours later, and when, during the subsequent week, Donald and his guardian had occasion to open the secretary, which stood in an apartment adjoining Mr. Chumleigh's room, no packet was to be found, nor did a thorough search reveal its presence in the house.

Suspicion fell on the butler, a middle-aged man, with a smooth-shaven face and dark eyes and hair, who had been in Mr. Chumleigh's employ for six months previous to his death. His nationality was not known, but he gave his name as John Martin, and, though his appearance was far from prepossessing, he was always a faithful servant, and, moreover, he came to Mr. Chumleigh with excellent recommendations.

John Martin chanced to be in the sick-room on the night that Mr. Chumleigh spoke of the package, and two days later he disappeared, leaving not a trace behind him. Donald was convinced that he had in some manner opened the secretary and abstracted the packet. He caused a search to be made, which at first proved unavailing, but nearly a month later it was learned that a man answering to the description of John Martin had taken passage from New York to Liverpool shortly after Mr. Chumleigh's death.

Donald allowed the matter to drop and gave it no further attention. He believed that the package contained something of monetary value—such as bonds or stocks—or possibly something in the nature of family heirlooms, jewels as likely as not. Whatever the contents, they certainly were worth stealing, at all events, for at the time of John Martin's disappearance nearly a month's wages were due him.

But Mr. Chumleigh's property, which went to his son without reserve, was of ample dimensions, and so the possible financial loss incurred by the theft of the package did not cause Donald any distress.

Two days after the death of Mr. Chumleigh the following paragraph appeared in one of the leading New York dailies:

"It was rumored at the Russian Legation to-day that Pierre Valbort, one of the most prominent Nihilists of St. Petersburg, had been seen in the city last evening by one who knew him well and recognized him in spite of a complete disguise. Investigation failed to confirm the rumor."

This paragraph did not meet Donald Chumleigh's eye, nor, had he chanced to see it, would he have dreamed for an instant that it could have any possible connection with the lost packet.

So much for Donald Chumleigh's personal history. Now let us follow him on his journey from Berlin to the Russian frontier.

Although much fatigued, the result of a round of sight-seeing in the German capital during the past few days, he did not go to sleep, but propped himself comfortably by the window and sat there all afternoon watching the flat, monotonous landscape, past which the express train sped swiftly. About nine o'clock in the evening he fell asleep, and did not wake until the train reached the vast frontier station of Wirballen an hour after midnight. Here a change of cars and a short interval of waiting were necessary.

In company with other travelers he entered the brilliantly lighted terminus, which was crowded with people of various nationalities, all clamoring for refreshments in a babel of tongues. The buffet was laden with bottles of wine, flasks of vodka and brandy, dishes of caviare, raw herrings, pickled fish, salted cucumbers, and countless other viands.

Donald contented himself with a slight lunch, and passed into the adjoining waiting room, where his luggage was overhauled and his passport vised by the custom officers. He knew that in less than half an hour the St. Petersburg train would be ready, but a sudden and overpowering drowsiness proved more than he was able to cope with, and he was soon sleeping soundly in a corner of one of the hard benches.

As soon as the St. Petersburg train was made up the railway porter summoned the waiting passengers, and in the rush that ensued Donald was unnoticed. With a sharp clanging of bells and a rumbling clatter the train moved swiftly out of the terminus.

Five minutes later Donald woke up with a start, and was angry enough to quarrel with his own shadow when he discovered what had taken place during his brief nap, though he little dreamed then of the fatal consequences that were to result from his carelessness.

Repressing a strong desire to knock down the porter, he inquired when the next train left, and on being informed that none would start until nearly noon of the following day, he gathered up his traps and left the station with the intention of finding a hotel—if Wirballen could boast such a luxury.

He entered the gloomy street—lit by a cheerless row of gas lamps—and looked round for a conveyance. Only one was in sight, a dingy and battered covered carriage on four wheels. It was backed up against the curb, and close by, leaning against a convenient post, was the driver. His shabby attire harmonized well with his vehicle, and when Donald approached the man he detected a strong odor of vodka.

"Carriage, your honor?" asked the Russian huskily.

Donald hesitated a moment. He could not afford to be particular, for this was the only conveyance at hand.

"Can you take me to a good hotel?" he asked.

"Certainly, your honor," replied the man, making an effort to stand straight. "I'll take you to Hotel Moscow—best place in Wirballen; only charge you two rubles."

"All right," replied Donald. He tossed his luggage into the carriage as the fellow opened the door for him, and was about to step in himself when his attention was arrested by the steady tramp of feet. As he turned half round ten men wearing the uniform of the Russian police marched down the pavement, and after a keen glance at Donald they passed into the station.

"They're after some poor rascal," muttered the driver.

Donald, however, paid but little attention to the circumstance.

He sprang into the carriage and closed the door, and a moment after the vehicle was rumbling up the deserted street. It had not proceeded more than twenty yards when half a dozen mounted Cossacks dashed by, and as Donald leaned partly out of the window to watch them he saw the flashing lights of a train as it rolled into the terminus from the direction of St. Petersburg.

For nearly half an hour the carriage turned in and out through a succession of gloomy streets, and at length Donald began to grow uneasy. The driver was evidently adding to his intoxication by repeated doses of vodka, for his accents became thicker and thicker as he shouted to his horse, and once a bottle slipped from his hand and rattled against the seat.

"The drunken rascal must have lost his way," thought Donald. "I was a fool to trust him."

That instant the carriage dashed violently into some obstruction, narrowly escaping an upset, and then came to a full stop. The driver's hoarse voice mingled with a clatter of hoofs, and when Donald hastily threw open the door and sprang to the ground the horse was galloping up the road with a portion of the harness dangling behind him, and the intoxicated Russian was climbing awkwardly down from his seat.

The carriage had collided with the low stone parapet of a bridge which spanned a dark ravine. Over this bridge ran the street—or rather road, for but few houses were in the vicinity, and the lamp posts of the town could be seen in the distance on three sides. The driver had lost his way and blundered into the suburbs.

As Donald looked helplessly around him he saw a dark figure approaching from the other end of the bridge.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT SUNDAY.